

"Oh, yes, your Grace," answered my mother.

"And gets on well?"

My mother hesitated. "Yes, your Grace," she replied, fibbing, I fear, for my sake.

"Have you thought to what trade you will put him?" asked the Duchess.

My mother did not answer. I glanced at her with surprise, for I knew the Duchess liked an immediate reply to her slightest question. But my mother continued silent, and then I saw her commence to clasp and unclasp her hands, a common trick of hers when agitated. The Duchess was a woman of quick perceptions. She raised her glasses to her eyes.

"What, what?" she asked in her peremptory manner.

"I—I don't want him to be put to any trade," my mother replied at last.

"What then?" asked the Duchess.

"I want him to be a——"

"Well, speak out. Is the woman dumb-struck? You want him to be a——"

"A gentleman!" whispered my mother, very dark about the eyes.

The Duchess was taken aback. "A gentleman!" she echoed. "And what do you mean by that? A clerk in an office? Tut, tut, much better make him a carpenter."